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UNCLAS VIENNA 000245

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOR NEA, EUR/ERA AND EUR/AGS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL IS AU EUN

SUBJECT: AUSTRIA CALLS ON FUTURE PALESTINIAN CABINET TO  
RENOUNCE VIOLENCE AND RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST

This message is sensitive but unclassified.

**¶1.** (U) Austrian Foreign Minister (and EU Foreign Ministers Council chair) Ursula Plassnik issued a press release on January 26 welcoming the peaceful nature of the recent Palestinian elections and reporting that the EU election observers had found the election to be "fair and open." She cautioned, however, that the EU would base its support of any future government on a renunciation of violence, commitment to pursue goals with purely political means and recognition of Israel's right to exist. Plassnik stressed that "all legislators who have emerged successful from the current elections should make a clear commitment to these goals in the Palestinian parliament."

**¶2.** (U) Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel announced that the EU political committee will meet in an extraordinary session tonight, January 26, to coordinate with the European Commission and prepare a unified line for the Foreign Ministers' meeting (GAERC) on Monday in Brussels.

**¶3.** (U) A senior Austrian official in Brussels told a press conference that Hamas remained on the EU list of terrorist organizations, but that the EU might "reevaluate its position" should Hamas "change its attitude."

**¶4.** (SBU) COMMENT: Austria clearly recognizes the limits of its role as president of the EU Council and prefers to err on the side of caution. Chancellor Schuessel and Foreign Minister Plassnik will want to consult at least the most important EU member states to reach consensus on next steps before going further in its public pronouncements.

KILNER